

Minutes of Special Meeting (Commission Interviews) of September 25, 2013

CALL TO ORDER 7:15 P.M.

ROLL CALL

COUNCILMEMBERS PRESENT: Feierbach, Wozniak, Warden

COUNCILMEMBERS ABSENT: Lieberman, Braunstein

Staff Present: Deputy City Clerk Plut

Interview Candidates for City Commissions

Discussion ensued regarding the possibility of extending the term of the Youth Commission seat for more than one year. It was noted that one of the applicants is a senior in high school. Council concurred to discuss the option of extending the youth commission seat for one term with the candidates.

Camron Dennler (Youth, Parks and Recreation)

He stated that he is a sports enthusiast and enjoys playing on Belmont sports fields. He noted that the fields could be of better quality. He stated that turfing the fields at the Sports Complex would be a benefit and the layout does not have to be changed. He explained that Belmont has many soccer fields and only one baseball field. He stated that he has watched Parks and Recreation meetings on television. He explained that he would be comfortable debating issues that come before the commission. He stated that in comparison to other cities the Belmont Youth Commission seat is better because you interact with and share ideas with the adult commissioners and have a voting position on the Commission. He stated that Twin Pines Park and the Sports Complex are his favorites in the City because of the blend of sports it provides. He stated that he would find the time to prepare for and be at every meeting.

Teyva Chee (Youth, Parks and Recreation)

She stated that she is currently a sophomore at Carlmont. She described her interest and participation in sports including basketball, badminton and archery. She stated that she plays the viola and is a member of the Peninsula Youth Orchestra. She stated that she has hopes of becoming an environmental scientist, and wants to bring a youth voice to preserving the environment. She stated that she wants to make sure Belmont has programs in place to keep parks clean and in good condition such as by providing recycling bins. She explained that if she was presented with a controversial issue she would listen closely to both sides and gather as much detail about the issue as possible. She explained that although differing sides of a controversial issue seem to be very different they could in fact be very similar and a compromise could be reached. She noted that her strategy would be to identifying what is important and base her vote on that. She stated that preparing and coming to meetings would be a priority because it affects the entire community. She stated that Alexander Park is her favorite park because it's near home.

Katie Green (Youth, Parks and Recreation)

She stated that she is a musician and a member of the Peninsula Youth Orchestra and hopes to become a music mentor at Carlmont to mentor elementary school kids. She stated that she sees the youth commission seat as a way to make the youth opinion known. She noted that teens see what adults do not. She stated that she has watched commission meetings and found them interesting. She stated that she finds the Parks Commission interesting because of the community-wide issues they deal with. She views the commission seat as a good place to get involved in the community. She stated that grades come first but she would be able to commit to preparing for and being at meetings. She stated that Twin Pines Park is her favorite because it reminds her of time spent with her friend. She explained that she is involved in the special needs community and would like to bring more education and understanding of their needs to the greater community.

George Burgess (Planning)

He shared what he hoped to accomplish as a Planning Commissioner. He stated that he wanted to be able to share with others about the quality of life in Belmont. He stated that with the help of the City Council, he would maintain the reactive enforcer role and help the commission be more proactive. He stated that he would provide guidance to the City Council on Davey Glen Park, NDNU (Notre Dame de Namur) and their educational issues, transportation issues, especially those on Ralston Avenue from highways 101 and 92, Sports Complex, architectural design of homes and neighborhoods and districts, parking, development and zoning, housing and interpreting of various ordinances. He noted that his involvement with other boards such as the Joint Powers Authority and the Transportation Authority would aide him in being an effective Planning Commissioner. He stated that current commissioners can be grouped into those that have an agenda, others have opinions that they voice on issues that come before the commission, and there are those who are generally open to make considerations on the merits of the situation. He stated that he places himself in the latter group. He stated that he is a consensus builder that makes decisions based on facts and figures. He noted that during design review, opinions come into play. He noted that he supports ordinances but exceptions can be made. He noted that floor area ratio should not be used as a basis for zoning. He explained that as a proactive commissioner he would try to identify opportunities for funding such as that from the Transit Authority. He explained that he would be an unbiased commissioner and would not be influenced by outside sources.

Amanda Governale (Planning)

She stated that she is involved in advocacy work and takes part in many committees. She stated that she has researched City of Belmont Ordinances because it interests her. She stated that presently she is a student at the College of San Mateo and is always looking for ways to get involved in her community. She explained that she is passionate about City, State and Federal issues. She explained that she would like to be involved with and share her opinions on long term projects such as High Speed Rail. She stated that she understands the work load of a commissioner and the time required to prepare for meetings and is prepared to make the commitment should she be appointed. She stated that she has worked with the accreditation of her college and has provided feedback to the trustees after reviewing thousands of pages of documentation.

Discussion ensued regarding Ms. Governale's advocacy trips to Washington D.C. to raise awareness of student fees and veterans rights.

She stated that if she were a commissioner presented with a request for a new construction permit she would make sure that City ordinances are being followed, that the structure appeals to the neighborhood and is it safe for the neighborhood. She noted that she would advocate for more trees. She noted that she likes the historic architecture in downtown Belmont but would like to see more business that would better cater to the community. She noted that Panda Express is not a good fit for Belmont. She added that the farmers market is a good addition and that she would like to see more of such events including a wine walk type of event to bring the community together. She explained that she would prefer cultural and architectural buildings along downtown and not residential buildings. She commented that the City website is frustrating to navigate.

ADJOURNMENT at this time, being 8:50 p.m.

Jozi Plut
Deputy City Clerk

Meeting recorded but not videotaped.